

TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY

## Conscious, transformational and LGBTQ family travels along with micro-cations top trends for 2020

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*Mindful travel seems to be the dominant trend heading into 2020. Image credit: Preferred Hotels & Resorts*

By STAFF REPORTS

A list of top 10 travel trends and hot destinations for 2020 shows how quickly millennials and Gen Z are shaping the future of time-off.

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According to analyses by [Preferred Hotels & Resorts](#), these trends will affect the way hospitality marketers treat travelers as they seek more experiences in a mindful manner. Here are the trends as portrayed by Preferred Hotels and largely in its own words:

**Conscious travel:** According to the *Sustainable Travel Report* released by Booking.com, 58 percent of travelers will consciously avoid visiting a destination if it is shown to negatively impact the people who live there.

"Hospitality brands that move beyond greenwashing to demonstrate how they are minimizing their social and environmental footprint are reaping the rewards in customer loyalty and share of wallet," said Michelle Woodley, president of Preferred Hotels.

**Transformational travel:** Described by the Transformative Travel Council as "intentionally traveling to stretch, learn and grow into new ways of being and engaging with the world," 2020 will witness this trend evolve as a critical thread connecting other trends identified this year.

As travelers harness nature, culture and social activities to connect with their inner self and promote qualitative life changes, transformational travel will more assertively intersect with conscious travel, micro-cations and second-city travel to become less focused on the self and more about the lasting benefit a traveler can have on others.

"Travel and the quest for 'Where next?' has long been used as a way to deal with the twists and turns in life, be it respite from a stressful career, a means to deal with major life events, or as a landmark activity and life-stage celebration," said Kristie Goshaw, chief marketing officer of Preferred Hotels.

"Transformative travel enables a traveler to immerse themselves in the virtues of travel, be they emotional, social,

physical or spiritual," she said. "It is the pursuit of becoming better versions of ourselves and in doing so, our humanity is reinforced."

**Micro-cations:** Defined as a leisure trip consisting of less than four nights, micro-cations' are rising in popularity among all age groups as travelers seek opportunities to see more destinations in a shorter amount of time.

Leading this trend are time-poor millennial executives who are replacing longer, more traditional vacations with shorter getaways.

"In a world where everyone is constantly connected, micro-cations offer an ideal opportunity to unwind and recharge in shorter, more frequent intervals," said Caroline Klein, Preferred Hotels' executive vice president of corporate communications and public relations.

"Getting away for just a few days, even if you are still responding to emails, helps put things into perspective," she said. "This trend truly resonates with me as the only millennial senior executive at Preferred Hotels & Resorts.

"I often try to add on a few days of leisure to international business trips to gain a new perspective on areas of the world that I may never visit again or that I have not experienced outside of a business context."

**LGBTQ family travel:** With a total of 25 countries across Europe and the Americas now legally recognizing and performing same-sex marriage, the industry is turning its attention to the LGBTQ family travel segment.

According to a recent report by LGBTQ market research firm Community Marketing & Insights, 85 percent of LGBTQ parents with children under 18 have taken one vacation or more as a family in the past year.

With more LGBTQ couples choosing to start their own families year on year, travel agents and tour operators should be addressing this demographic's service, privacy and security requirements.

"While lesbians have long spearheaded LGBTQ family travel, we have seen a notable increase in gay men traveling with their children, which presents a huge opportunity for well-positioned travel brands to directly market their programs and experiences," said Rick Stiffler, Preferred Hotels' senior vice president of leisure sales and ambassador for Preferred Pride.

**Insta-tourism:** According to a recent study by Amadeus, 40 percent of Instagram users under the age of 33 ranked Instagram as a top factor for selecting a vacation, and with more than 500 million users sharing an average of 85 million photos each day according to the National Geographic Instagram is undoubtedly the most prominent source of wanderlust inspiration, guiding travelers to their destination choices.

"In 2020, it will be more essential than ever for travel brands to effectively leverage the power of Instagram to capture the attention and engagement of target audiences and ultimately drive bookings," said Lindsey Ueberroth, CEO of Preferred Hotels.

"Content, campaigns and collaborative partnerships should be crafted to appeal to Generation Z, in addition to millennials, who are starting to build their brand loyalties and are influential in the decision process for family vacations," she said.

**Second-city travel:** According to a recent survey by Booking.com, 54 percent of global travelers want to play a part in reducing over-tourism, while 51 percent would swap their original destination for a similar alternative if it would have a positive environmental or social impact.

As such, travelers are starting to choose secondary and tertiary destinations that still provide the same charm and culture as their better-known counterparts to alleviate the issues.

"We see growth in a number of secondary markets globally, owed in part to improved air access and more diverse travel itineraries from tour operators," said Robert Van Ness, executive vice president of the Americas at Preferred Hotels.

"With this trend, we believe destinations such as Guadalajara, Mexico; Suzhou, China; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Porto, Portugal; and Belfast, Northern Ireland, and similar, are likely to see an uptick in visitors in the New Year," he said.

**Residential-style accommodations:** Residential options continue to surge in popularity among all travel segments, given their ability to provide more flexibility for individual or group needs, particularly at a time when multi-generational trips, personalization and convenience are a top priority for travelers.

In response, hospitality brands, particularly luxury hotel groups, will further invest in the expansion of their

residential-style inventory in 2020, with the goal of increasing their share of a market dominated by a handful of alternative lodging providers.

"While the hotel pipeline continues to boom, travelers are increasingly seeking residential-style lodging options, ranging from beachfront villas with access to resort facilities for family celebrations to city-center serviced apartments for business and even short-term relocations," said Philipp Wegmann, Preferred Hotels' executive vice president of Europe.

Hot destination: Mexico: Mexico's rich and diverse culture naturally lends itself to hospitality experiences that showcase the people, local design and architecture and regional cuisines.

As such, tourism to Mexico is on the rise, with total visitors in 2019 estimated to top more than 45 million by year-end, a 5.6 percent growth from the previous year, with an increase in upper upscale and luxury properties projected to launch in 2020 to meet the growing demand.

"Mexico's luxury market has emerged over the past few years to be the largest and most resilient in Latin America, with new destinations like Los Cabos and established ones like Yucatan Peninsula leading the way." said Antonio Vera, regional director of Mexico at Preferred Hotels.

Hot destinations: Copenhagen and Denmark: As sustainability continues to remain top-of-mind for travelers globally, eco-friendly destinations contributing to the protection of their local environment are rising in popularity.

In Europe, Copenhagen is aiming to become the world's first carbon neutral city by 2025, while Denmark overall has been regularly voted one of the happiest and healthiest countries.

Hot destination: Japan: With annual arrivals soaring by more than 24 million, Japan was the decade's fastest-growing major travel destination.

Fresh from the excitement surrounding this year's 2019 Rugby World Cup and newly lifted visa restrictions, Tokyo is poised to trend again.

In addition to hosting the 2020 Summer Olympic and Paralympic Games, Shibuya, the capital city's major commercial district, is currently undergoing a massive skyline changing redevelopment.

"As Tokyo aims to reach more international travelers, the Japanese National Tourism Board is further investing in multilingual marketing campaigns to generate interest in Japan's lesser-visited destinations, helping to fuel a wider discovery of the country long after the Olympics," said Kaori Yamaguchi, managing director of Japan at Preferred Hotels.

BASED IN Newport Beach, CA, Preferred Hotels & Resorts claims to be the world's largest independent hotelbrand, representing more than 750 hotels, resorts, residences and hotel groups across 85 countries.

*Preferred Hotels & Resorts' Banyan Tree Mayakoba property in Mexico*